

Parents United Canada

Submission to the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

The Myth of the Immutability of Sexual Orientation and Gender
Identity

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Protecting Youth Begins with Recognizing Sexual Development and Fluidity

THE MYTH OF IMMUTABILITY

In response to your call for input for a thematic report on gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity, Parents United Canada, a parental-rights and child-protection organization in Canada, would like to comment and provide data ensuring an evidence-based approach to a highly politicized set of issues.

The objectives and inputs sought by the Independent Expert assumes that sexual orientation and gender identity are fixed identities and experiences. The peer-reviewed medical studies, however, are increasingly finding that these are highly unstable traits and subject to significant fluidity, especially amongst young people and women. Concerning youth, Savin-Williams and Ream state in their seminal 2007 study *Prevalence and Stability of Sexual Orientation Components*, "Researchers readily acknowledge the existence of such sexual groups ('gay youth') with little evidence that these individuals will be in the same group a month, a year, or a decade henceforth. Evidence to support sexual orientation stability among nonheterosexuals is surprisingly meager." Since 2007 the evidence has grown, but for the fluidity of orientation, not stability. Leading researcher Lisa Diamond ([Sexual Fluidity](#)) states:

The existing body of international research assessing sexual attractions, behaviors, and identities among representative samples of adolescents and adults shows that sexual orientation is not a static and categorical trait. Rather, same-sex sexuality shows substantial fluidity in both men and women, and this fluidity takes a number of forms.

The literature on gender dysphoria and gender identity is not nearly as mature as that on sexual orientation. No quantitative long-term studies exist on rates of change in gender identity or detransition among adults. In fact, research on this topic [has been blocked](#) due to political pressures in the UK. However, there is considerable data which demonstrates childhood gender dysphoria goes away in adolescence far more often than it persists. In regard to gender identity among children and adolescence however, Thomas Steensma ([Desisting and Persisting](#)) sums up the literature's findings that gender dysphoria most often desists in adolescence: "Although the persistence rates differed between the various studies (2% to 27%), the results unequivocally showed that the gender dysphoria remitted after puberty in the vast majority of children."

The following summaries demonstrate the fluidity and non-immutability of both sexual orientation and gender identity. These are taken from reputable peer-reviewed journals.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

- **Stewart 2019, *Developmental Patterns of Sexual Identity***
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197119301745>
In a population-based longitudinal annual study of adolescents over three years, “Results revealed 26% of girls and 11% of boys reported fluidity in identity and 31% of girls and 10% of boys reported fluidity in attractions. At each time point, up to 20% of girls and 6% of boys reported a sexual minority identity label with concurrent same-sex attraction.”
- **Berona 2018, *Trajectories of Sexual Orientation from Adolescence to Young Adulthood***
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30060858>
In a longitudinal cohort of girls, the authors found that 63.2% reported at least one change in sexual orientation over eight years, from ages 14 to 22. The girls categorized by the researchers as lesbians averaged three orientation changes in that time.
- **Diamond 2017 *Stability of Sexual Attractions Across Different Timescales***
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-016-0860-x>
Retrospectively, “the majority of the nonheterosexual respondents had undergone multiple changes in sexual identity: 82% of the lesbian/bisexual women and 78% of the gay/bisexual men reported having switched their sexual identity label at least once *after* having first adopted a nonheterosexual identity, and 45% of women and 34% of men reported two or more identity changes.” Significant day-to-day fluidity, especially among women, was also reported.
- **Katz-Wise 2015, *Sexual Fluidity in Young Adult Women and Men***
<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2017-01123-003>
“Sexual fluidity in attractions was reported for 64% of women and 52% of men, with 49% of women and 36% of men reporting subsequent sexual fluidity in sexual identity. Furthermore, 23% of women and 22% of men experienced more than one change in attractions.”
- **Everett 2015, *Sexual Orientation Identity Change***
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0022146514568349>
In a population-based longitudinal study in young adults, “twelve percent of the total sample reported a different sexual orientation identity between Waves 3 and 4,” a span of seven years.
- **Dickson 2013, *Stability and Change in Same-Sex Attraction, Experience, and Identity***
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23430085>
In a New Zealand cohort of young adults, “among the men, any change in sexual attraction was reported by 4.2, 3.3, and 2.9 % in the age periods 21–26, 26–32, and 32–38 years, respectively; the comparable proportions for the women were 16.1, 16.3, and 11.8 %.”
- **Ott 2011, *Stability and Change in Self-Reported Sexual Orientation Identity in Young People***
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3081371/>
In a longitudinal cohort study, the authors found significant sexual orientation fluidity in both males and females in both adolescence and young adulthood.

- **Savin-Williams & Ream 2007, *Prevalence and Stability of Sexual Orientation Components***
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17195103>
 In a large, population-based longitudinal study of adolescents, the authors found that 87.7% of bisexual males, 88.7% of bisexual females, 71.6% of homosexual males, and 76.8% of homosexual females moved from same-sex sexual behavior to completely heterosexual behavior within 6 years. Changes in same-sex identity were roughly similar.
 For confirmation of this data see Fish 2017: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-017-0993-6>.

GENDER IDENTITY:

- **Singh 2012, *A Follow-Up Study of Boys with Gender Identity Disorder***
<https://images.nymag.com/images/2/daily/2016/01/SINGH-DISSERTATION.pdf>
 This Canadian dissertation, cited in the broader literature, found that of 139 males, 87.8% desisted from gender dysphoria over an average of a 13 year period.
- **Drummond 2008, *A Follow-Up Study of Girls with Gender Identity Disorder***
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5657572_A_Follow-Up_Study_of_Girls_With_Gender_Identity_Disorder
 This Canadian study of 25 females found 88% desistence over an average of a 12 year period.
- **Wallien & Cohen-Kettenis 2008, *Psychosexual Outcome of Gender-Dysphoric Children***
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23449293_Psychosexual_Outcome_of_Gender-Dysphoric_Children
 This Dutch study found 73% desistence in a mixed-sex group of 77 over an average of a 10 year period.
- **Zucker & Bradley 1995, *Gender Identity Disorder and Psychosexual Problems in Children and Adolescents***
https://www.amazon.com/Identity-Disorder-Psychosexual-Adolescents-Hardcover/dp/B00ZT0C7WU/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=zucker+bradley&qid=1584793813&sr=8-1
 The Canadian study findings reported in this book were 80% desistence of a group of 77 males over an average of an 8 year period.
- **Green 1987, *The "Sissy Boy Syndrome" and the Development of Homosexuality***
https://www.amazon.com/Sissy-Boy-Syndrome-Development-Homosexuality/dp/0300036965/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=green+sissy+boys&qid=1584793922&rnid=2941120011&s=books&sr=1-1
 In the only prospective longitudinal study ever done on persistence of gender dysphoria, Green found 98% desistence in a group of 44 males from the United States.

For all studies on persistence/desistence of gender dysphoria in children, the average desistence is 84.2% according to Steensma ([Desisting and Persisting](#)). It could not be clearer in the literature that not only can gender dysphoria or gender identity change in adolescence, it changes and remits more often than not.

The ramifications of this peer-reviewed evidence base are significant. Comprehensive sex education should not include anal sex or other forms of highly dangerous sexual behaviours such as anilingus. Anal sex among males is associated with 3.6 times higher risk of mortality ([Cochran 2011](#)), and 140 times higher risk of both HIV infections and syphilis ([Pathela 2011](#)). Anal sex has often been included in comprehensive sex education under the guise of removing stigma for young gay males. However, anal sex is 17 times more risky per sexual act than vaginal sex even for heterosexuals ([O’Leary 2017](#)) and is very often a coercive sexual behaviour and linked with power disparities between insertive and receptive actors ([Marston 2014](#), [McBride 2018](#)). However, given the fact that the vast majority of same-sex behaved adolescents will settle into heterosexual relationships and behaviors, risky sexual behaviours should not be encouraged or normalized.

Another ramification of identity and sexual fluidity is that these changes create a clash between sexual orientation (or more specifically, same-sex attraction) and gender identity. The literature on gender-dysphoria desistence demonstrates that [half of those who desist are same-sex attracted](#), a number highly elevated over population norms. As gender identity is suggested and normalized through comprehensive sex education and peer networks, the strong likelihood is that same-sex attracted young people are currently undergoing a form of conversion therapy to heterosexual attractions by blocking a normal pubertal process, taking off-label cross-sex hormones for the rest of their lives, and having healthy body parts amputated. This process is being called “[gay eugenics](#)” by many LGB advocates.

As Independent Expert, I urge you to recognize that under false perceptions of the peer-reviewed literature, violence and harm *are* being perpetrated and that comprehensive sex education as it is currently practiced is part of the structure-base of that violence. Please protect our children from harm.

Paul Dirks

Provided [testimony](#) to Senate on Bill C-16

Published at [The Public Discourse](#)

For Parents United Canada

